

September 2, 2009

### **OBEY BRIEFED ON CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT EFFORT AT LOCAL JOB CENTER**

ASHLAND, WI – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) was in Ashland today to visit the Ashland Job Center and hear how the Northwest Wisconsin Concentrated Employment Program (CEP, Inc.) is using federal funds to assist with jobs. CEP, Inc. has received \$1.7 million in federal funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to assist dislocated workers, young people, and adults facing long term unemployment and under-employment. The funding was provided through legislation produced by the Appropriations Committee which Obey chairs.

CEP, Inc. field staff utilized these federal funds across ten Northwest Wisconsin counties in a concentrated effort to assist more than 800 young people, adults, dislocated workers and those who are chronically under-unemployed to gain valuable work experience and on-the-job training.

“We have a massive hole of over \$3 trillion in our economy,” said Obey. “The Recovery Act was meant to help soften the blow for those who were hit the hardest by the recession. We need to provide folks who have lost their jobs with extended and expanded unemployment benefits, help them to keep their health coverage, and help them with the cost of keeping their kids in school.”

Through CEP, Inc. youth workers do summer jobs, adults receive on-the-job training and others gain work experience through a range of activities such as:

- School maintenance and cleaning;
- Park and public space maintenance;

- Energy conservation efforts;
- Bike trail development to increase tourism;
- Highway maintenance;
- Staffing local libraries.

The CEP, Inc. effort has successfully helped hundreds of Northwest Wisconsin people to access employment opportunities, receive job training and develop valuable work experience. In addition, communities benefit from this financial infusion when people receive wages for these jobs. “Nobody who works forty hours a week ought to go home at the end of that week still in poverty. And it’s a disgrace that they do, thanks in part to the fact that the minimum wage is so low,” said Obey.

“At a time of great economic stress, the CEP, Inc. staff is providing people in Northwest Wisconsin with valuable skills, a consistent paycheck to meet their needs and maintain their homes, and most importantly hope for the future,” Obey added.

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